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The Political Aspect of Reform: Teacher Resistance as Good Sense

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This article provides a careful reading of what we refer to as the school change literature. Focusing on some of the prominent scholars within this tradition—Havelock, Huberman, Miles, Sarason, Fullan, Hargreaves, and Rosenholtz—we use empirical evidence from a case study of site-based decision making to argue that the emphasis within this tradition on promoting teacher engagement in reform endeavors obscures the political insights of those teachers who resist reform. Whether school change researchers recommend expert assistance or the development of collaborative school cultures as a way to achieve successful reform, the potential good sense embodied in teachers' resistance to innovation efforts tends to be discounted. Considering the possibility that the acts of resistant teachers reflect good sense, our study indicates that the school change literature overlooks the preconditions for reform: the fundamental restructuring of teachers' work. Given the long history of teacher resistance to reform, and their continuing concern about issues of time and authority, we suggest that current reform proposals focus on these issues not only to alter the class and gender bias embedded in the construction of teachers' work, but also to avoid the push-pull cycle where outsiders push for reforms and teachers resist, leaving schools fundamentally unchanged.

Reform proposals in the United States have in the last two decades moved from excellence to restructuring to choice. In the background, largely confined to academic circles, is an orientation to reform—an orientation we refer to as the “school change” perspective—which suggests that these federal- and state-sponsored proposals are likely to leave schools fundamentally the same. School change researchers argue that these politically motivated reforms have neglected the problems of implementation. This oversight, they argue, makes likely that even well-intentioned reforms will not get the needed commitment

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from practitioners to be successful. For reforms to be successful, school change researchers recommend that closer attention be paid to teachers' understanding of reform, and that ways be found to engage teachers in the reform process. Without engaged practitioners, reform efforts, in the researchers' view, are likely to create a push-pull process (outsiders pushing and teachers resisting) where, in Seymour Sarason's (1971) words, "the more things change the more they stay the same" (p. 2). Given the consistent failure of politically motivated educational reforms, we believe school change research provides an important alternative perspective that deserves careful consideration.

Such consideration, in part, means recognizing differences within the school change orientation. There are two distinct "waves" or orientations within school change research. The first wave, which includes such scholars as Havelock (1971, 1973) and Huberman and Miles (1984), is centrally concerned with the influence of particular variables, such as the use of outside assistance, upon the success of reform initiatives. Successful reforms, they argue, overcome initial teacher resistance by providing sufficient support from outside consultants; the result is practitioners who are engaged and committed to the goals of the reform process. The second wave, which includes such scholars as Fullan (1991, 1993), Hargreaves (1993), Rosenholtz (1989), and Sarason (1971, 1990), also focuses on implementation questions but is not primarily concerned with the identification of a variety of variables influencing reform; rather, second-wave researchers focus on ways that the culture of teaching enables or limits the reform process.¹ One of the earliest statements of this second-wave perspective appears in *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Sarason 1971). In

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this text, Sarason criticizes one typical attempt to mandate reform in schools: the introduction of the “new math.” Largely in response to political and technological competition with the U.S.S.R., Sarason argues that the new math reflected the aspirations of politicians and university professors—not public school teachers (Sarason 1971, p. 34). Reformers mistakenly believed they could change the curriculum while leaving the school culture intact: “There was little sensitivity to the plight of the teachers—they were being asked to learn procedures, vocabulary, and concepts that were not only new but likely to conflict with highly overlearned attitudes and ways of thinking” (Sarason 1971, p. 42). According to Sarason, by neglecting existing school cultures, reformers created a process that did not engage teachers; most teachers either would not learn the new math or would resist it outright.

While the two waves reflect different approaches to the question of reform implementation, they both maintain that successful reforms find ways to overcome resistance and encourage engagement. In our view, the focus on questions of implementation provides important advantages over politically motivated top-down reforms that ignore the school context. We will argue, however, that by emphasizing engagement, school change researchers overlook the good sense embedded in teachers’ resistant acts, which often point to the fundamental importance of altering authority relations and intensified work conditions. This oversight is particularly apparent in first-wave school change perspectives. Second-wave school change researchers are more sensitive to the potential importance of teacher resistance, but they also ignore the deeper meaning of teacher resistance and fail to go far enough in laying the foundation for progressive school change.

To develop this argument, we begin with a discussion of the school change literature. This brief overview is followed by an empirical study of a site-based management approach to reform that is used to scrutinize the assumptions within the school change perspective. Finally, we examine the recommendations put forth by the school change researchers by comparing these to a careful consideration of the potential insights found in teachers’ resistant acts.

The School Change Perspective

One of the major themes within the school change literature centers on the issue of engagement. First-wave school change researchers see teachers’ active engagement in the reform process as one of the key factors in successful reform efforts. Havelock (1973), for example, stresses that “catalysts . . . should think reasonably about the steps that

need to be followed to win support for their cause and to reduce resistance to the changes they wish to see come about" (p. 16). Huberman (1973) continues this line of argument by noting that "the most durable and effective innovations are those which the user has internalized; that is, which he has embraced because they satisfy his own specific needs" (p. 3). Huberman and Miles (1984) add to the engagement thesis by suggesting that "if those who owned and managed the innovation decided to disengage, other positive factors (e.g., building endorsement, user mastery, and stabilization of use) made little difference" (p. 211). Lack of engagement is also seen by the second wave of school change researchers as a primary reason for the failure of educational reform: "We have begun to see deeply what the basic problem [of educational reform] is. In a nutshell, the core problem is that education as it is now practiced does not engage students, teachers, parents, and administrators" (Fullan 1991, p. 203). Engagement for both first- and second-wave school change researchers is a process of establishing commitment for reform efforts such that teachers are motivated to implement the required changes and gain a sense of efficacy through their hard work.

The causes of nonengagement and the possible ways to further engagement occupy a good deal of the school change literature. One such cause, held by both first and second waves, is the lack of attention paid to the meaning of reform for those involved. Huberman (1973), for example, notes that "the critical factor seems to be not the nature of the innovation nor its potential for improving learning, but rather the adopter's concept of the changes he personally will be required to make" (p. 3). Sarason makes the same sort of argument, although he develops it differently, when he notes that it simply does not work to pursue top-down reforms as one might "go about creating and improving an assembly line" as if "what it means to those who work on the assembly line is of secondary significance" (Sarason 1990, p. 123). Fullan extends this argument by pointing out that "educational change is a process of coming to grips with the *multiple* realities of people, who are the main participants in implementing change" (Fullan 1991, p. 95). The "core problem" of reform, according to Fullan, lies in overcoming the present disjuncture between administrative structures and the multiple realities of people in particular schools.

From the perspective of those championing school change, engagement of teachers and others is limited, in part, because reforms do not consider how these participants understand their role, relations with others, and even the meaning of change itself. Those in the first wave focus specifically on the fact that innovators often do not understand that those working in schools have an "inbuilt resistance

to change [such that] the quest for novelty must be subordinated to the desire for stability" (Huberman 1973, p. 1). Second-wave school change researchers take a less determinist and pessimistic orientation; they argue that reform fails when the school culture—the regularities found within schools that shape behavior, beliefs, and role expectations—is overlooked. Sarason (1971) summarizes this argument nicely when he warns that "many people having a role in, or concern for, educational planning and change possess no intimate knowledge of the culture of the setting they wish to influence and change" (p. 8).

Sarason uses the principal's relations with teachers as a case in point. For Sarason, the principal is expected by teachers and others to lead reform efforts but rarely has the appropriate training to provide such leadership. Teachers, on the other hand, often have unrealistic expectations concerning the array of issues principals control. In making such an argument, Sarason (1971) begins by suggesting that principals play a key role in reform because "any kind of system change puts him in the role of implementing the change in the school" (p. 111). However, in most cases, principals come up through the system with no specific training to prepare them for this role. According to Sarason, "the fact that a teacher has spent a number of years in a classroom *with children* is no compelling basis for assuming that it prepares one for a position in which one's major task is working *with adults*. Put in another way: being a 'leader' of children, and exclusively children, does not necessarily prepare one for being a leader of adults" (p. 112). Sarason goes on to say that "because it is literally impossible for a teacher to observe the principal in the wide variety of relationships in which he engages," teachers do not have an accurate picture of the principal's role (p. 114). These characteristics of the principal-teacher relationship are not taken into account when reforms are implemented, and, as a consequence, the possibilities for change are severely limited. Put differently, unless principals are given leadership training and teachers develop a more accurate picture of the principal's role, reform is unlikely to engage participants and be successful.

The culture of teaching and its potential for limiting teacher engagement with reform is also a central focus in Hargreaves's work. While his emphasis differs from Sarason, he is in agreement with Sarason that some teacher cultures stand in the way of teacher engagement and therefore educational reform. In particular, Hargreaves (1972a) describes Lortie's view that teachers are presentist, conservative, and individualistic:

Elementary teachers . . . concentrate on short term planning in their classrooms where their energies are more likely to make a difference (presentism); they avoid discussing, thinking about or

committing themselves to more fundamental changes that might affect the context of what they do or raise substantial questions about how they teach (conservatism); and they shy away from collaboration with colleagues and from the feared judgments and criticisms that may come with that (individualism). Like caged birds, teachers within the culture of individualism, it seems, stick with what they know. They are reluctant to fly free, even when given the opportunity. (Pp. 220–21)

While Hargreaves is not entirely comfortable with Lortie's description of teacher culture, he does believe it captures the reality of many schools. Individualism, for example, may be an understandable and even healthy response to teachers' working circumstances, but Hargreaves (1992a) concurs with Lortie that individualism is "alive and well in most schools" (p. 222)—posing an obstacle to educational reform.

While first-wave school change researchers do not rely on a cultural perspective, they do note that the psychological characteristics of teachers stand in the way of engagement and reform. For example, Huberman (1973) argues that school personnel "are oversensitive to criticism" (p. 26), that teachers' desire for autonomy runs against a critical analysis of their work (p. 30), and that "teachers resist in particular all changes which leave them with less control over the classroom or over the students in it" (p. 45). When teachers do resist, according to Huberman, they "react defensively often by using former practices more secretly" (p. 45). In this sense, both the first and second waves of school change researchers see the cultural characteristics of schools and the psychological traits of teachers as standing in the way of engagement.

McLaughlin also employs a cultural analysis to understand reform. However, in contrast to most of the second-wave school change researchers, her research finds that school culture is not monolithic; instead schools have multiple cultures that often divide along departmental lines. For example, the English department might have very collaborative relations, while math teachers might be isolated. McLaughlin (1993) adds to the understanding of the relation between school culture and educational change by stressing the importance of linking contextual cultures—such as those found in a department within a school—with reform efforts (pp. 92–97). Engagement, in this view, requires an understanding of "microcultures" within schools, not simply a generalized understanding of cultural regularities.

The school change literature is not limited to an understanding of how schools and school culture constrain engagement and successful reform. This literature also recommends a number of possible directions to facilitate reform efforts. Most first-wave school change researchers, for example, assume that "resistance to change is propor-

tional to the amount of change required by the receiving system" (Huberman 1973, p. 45). However, trying to facilitate change by lowering resistance, in their view, only results in compromising and scaling down the reform effort. Instead, they recommend that administrators "make strong demands on the users" (Huberman and Miles 1984, p. 232) through "benevolently authoritarian forms of management" (p. 258) that create the need for teachers "to swim in new waters" (p. 232). At the same time, administrators need to provide significant assistance from outside consultants and other "change agents" to help teachers begin to master the new innovations. By forcing teachers to put forth a great deal of effort, these researchers claim that teachers will develop commitment for the reform, and "accept it and even like it" (Huberman and Miles 1984, p. 193). Further, the effort expended by teachers is thought to increase the likelihood that the reform will become stabilized—becoming a routinized part of teachers' practice. Effective reform, in their view, results from ignoring initial resistance, keeping demands high, and achieving engagement by bringing in outside consultants who help teachers gain mastery of the new innovation.

Second-wave school researchers, on the other hand, most commonly recommend the development of collaborative school cultures. Collaboration is seen as a means of overcoming the isolation and alienation of teachers, making teachers more receptive to and engaged with educational reform. Rosenholtz (1989) provides significant evidence on behalf of this vision, arguing that noncollaborative schools tend to be marred by cynicism and routinized practice, while collaborative schools supported continuous change: teachers and principals interact freely, pooling understanding to improve educational practice (pp. 41–70). Fullan (1991) continues this line of reasoning and suggests that collaborative work cultures raise morale, increase teacher enthusiasm, and help get things done: "It [collaborative work cultures] helps reduce the professional isolation of teachers, allowing the codification and sharing of successful practices and the provision of support. . . . Working together has the potential of raising morale and enthusiasm, opening the door to experimentation and increased sense of efficacy. . . . Constant communication and joint work provide the continuous pressure and support necessary for getting things done" (p. 84). Some researchers, such as Hargreaves (1993) and Fullan (1993) have provided important insights into some of the pitfalls of moving in the direction of collaboration, not the least of which are balkanization and groupthink. In the final analysis, however, most second-wave school change researchers see collaboration as a guiding approach for education reform. Hargreaves (1994) captures this view well when he states that "one of the most promising metaparadigms of the postmodern

age is that of collaboration as an organizing and integrating principle of action, planning, culture, development, organization, and research” (p. 245).

School change is not a unified theory held in common. It is a pragmatic orientation that directs attention to what is required to make educational reforms successful. The centerpiece of this perspective is the issue of engagement. Focusing on engagement directs attention on how to encourage motivation and commitment for reform with an improved sense of efficacy. Enhancing commitment, motivation, and efficacy require finding ways to compensate for the psychological and cultural limits of those implementing reforms. Using outside experts to help teachers develop skill mastery and movement toward a collaborative school culture are central parts of the compensatory recommendations suggested to overcome these limits. To consider the assumptions and recommendations found in the school change literature, we now turn to our analysis of the site-based approach to reform at West Meadow Elementary.

Site-Based Reform at West Meadow Elementary

The reform movement at West Meadow was not intended to embody the wisdom of the school change perspective, but it provides an opportunity to consider the meaning of school change analyses and recommendations in a particular context. In September of 1989 the Valley District decided to experiment with site-based management. The superintendent was interested in site-based management because, as he noted, it gave schools “maximum flexibility, with respect to the means of inducing learning and achieving learning objectives, while also providing great accountability for results.” To facilitate this process the district asked all interested schools to submit a site-based plan for change. If the plan fit within the district guidelines and the objectives found in the state core curriculum and included district-wide assessment instruments, monies normally slotted for teacher and school development would go directly to the school to facilitate the planned change.

West Meadow Elementary submitted a successful proposal. Their proposal, based on a two-day workshop given by an outside consultant, involved the articulation of a mission statement and an implementation plan determined by teachers, administrators, and parents. The reform called for a university-school partnership and an assessment of the changes made at the classroom level. Because the principal was keen to develop a university-school partnership (“it makes me feel that I’m

not sitting out there all by myself”), we were invited to make a proposal to the faculty to see if they would allow us to observe and assess the reform process. The faculty agreed that we could observe and assess the process, although, as we will point out shortly, our participation was seen by many teachers as an affront to their authority.

To trace the implementation of the reform, we interviewed all the people who were influential in conceiving, administering, and planning the change process. Because this particular approach to site-based management depended on coordinated efforts by parents, teachers, and administrators, we sent out questionnaires to 75 randomly selected parents, all the teachers, and the principal. These questionnaires primarily addressed three types of subjects: the person’s understanding of the reform process, the role she or he played in the process, and her or his attitude toward the school and others involved in the reform.

We also attended and took extensive notes at all the faculty meetings and subcommittee meetings where the reform was discussed, and collected all relevant artifacts. Further, we observed classroom practice two half-days per week for 15 weeks. For each observation, extensive field notes were taken and informal interviews conducted to learn teachers’ and students’ views on the lessons observed.

Resistance: Obstruction or Good Sense?

The West Meadow principal hoped to begin the reform effort by having teachers articulate their concerns. The question posed by the principal at the first full faculty meeting was, “Are there central issues [of concern] that we can do something about?” After much discussion, the teachers produced a list of concerns that suggested their resistance to significant change: (1) “everyone has a job that creates work for others,” (2) “too many meetings,” and (3) “machines don’t work (copying, etc.) and the work room doesn’t function.” From the school change perspective these articulated teacher goals would likely be seen as an indication that teachers lacked motivation for the reform effort. Both first- and second-wave school change researchers agree that teacher motivation is a key factor in determining the success of a particular reform. Huberman and Miles (1984), for example, note in their analysis of 12 case studies of innovation that “high-changing sites were those where external funds were not especially salient, and the problem-solving motivation was strong . . . there was interest, even passion, directed toward the innovation *before* funds were actively sought” (p. 177). McLaughlin (1990) supports this point of view by noting that

motivated teachers—"teachers [who have a] willingness to expend consistently high effort in their work" (p. 3)—are a key factor in furthering effective school change. Fullan (1991) adds to this line of thinking by arguing that a central concern for reformers is not getting "rid of the deadwood, but rather how to motivate good teachers throughout their careers" (p. 143).

Using motivation as an analytical lens, it would be easy to view these statements as obstructionist: teachers, who are unwilling to expend consistently high effort to further the reform, focus instead on reducing their workload within the current school context. This lack of motivation, in turn, could be used as evidence to confirm Huberman's, Miles's, and Hargreaves's contention that teachers often act conservatively. They are reluctant to support fundamental change or raise substantive questions about what they do in the classroom.

The principal at West Meadow seemed to agree with the school change researchers that the articulated concerns of teachers indicated low levels of motivation. To overcome this "obstruction" of the reform process she adopted a more authoritarian form of management. After the conclusion of the first meeting, the principal called a second meeting, but this time only with career ladder leaders. In the Valley District career ladder teachers get extra pay, up to \$2,000 a year, to work on special projects that are approved by the principal and ultimately by the district. These teachers are given opportunities to be centrally involved in decision making by serving on district committees, and they often take leadership roles within their schools and are relied on by principals to give them feedback and facilitate administrative initiatives. It is not surprising that these teachers are often aligned with administrative interests and find themselves in a tense relationship with other teachers.

At the second meeting with the career ladder teachers a different list of goals was established that was more congruent with the principal's priorities. The list included the restructuring of math assessment; direct instruction on social skills, such as student responsibility; and the implementation of instructional methods, such as cooperative learning and whole language. The West Meadow principal's strategy—bypassing teacher resistance and constructing "meaningful" reform aims—might be viewed as a wise one by school change researchers, who commonly suggest that administrators play a key role in reform initiatives (see, e.g., Lieberman and Miller 1992, pp. 92–93; Fullan 1991, pp. 83, 211; Huberman and Miles 1984, p. 232; and Havelock 1973, pp. 9–10). In contrast, we believe teachers' initial expressions of cynicism about reform should not automatically be viewed as obstructionist acts to be overcome. Instead, time should be spent looking

carefully at these resistant acts to see if they might embody a form of good sense—potential insights into the root causes of why the more things change the more they stay the same.

Teacher questionnaires and observations of faculty meetings indicate that the original list of goals reflected teachers' implicit understanding of their work conditions. For example, on the questionnaire filled out before planning meetings began, teachers expressed concerns about what this reform process would mean for their already busy work schedule: "Time—I am always concerned about the amount of time the reform will take." Another teacher expressed her concerns this way: "It may be a lot more work than we anticipate." Other teachers also expressed strong doubts about how much authority would be transferred to the teachers and questioned whether resources for the change process would really be made available: "In Valley we are still going to have to jump through all the district goals and there is no money to implement innovations or additional goals." Another teacher reiterated this concern by concluding that "it [site-based management] is seen as just another program to follow that will fade and be replaced. Consensus, commitment and follow through beyond that of lip service by all faculty members is unrealistic at this time." Apparently, many teachers entered the reform process with concerns about their workload, which they viewed as already busy and intense. They also expressed concerns about district commitment, the impact of the reform process on teacher authority, and, most important, the availability of resources to enable teachers to carry out their decisions.

By keeping these concerns in mind, the issues expressed by the teachers in the first planning meeting can be seen as something other than a conservative attempt by teachers to obstruct reform efforts. In particular, they could be viewed as an attempt by teachers to express an understanding of their work that the current site-based management efforts seem to be discounting. If we are to take teachers' comments at face value—believing they express legitimate concerns about teacher authority within the site-based scheme—the original reform goal expressing the concern that "everyone has a job that creates work for others" can be read as an insight: career ladder teachers create work for teachers and limit their decision-making authority. Career ladder teachers did rewrite the initial concerns so that they more closely reflected the principal's priorities. Furthermore, the newly developed goals articulated by the career ladder teachers would create more work for the teaching staff, which would be added to their already intense workload. In this sense "everyone has a job that creates work for others" cannot be assumed a priori to reflect obstructionist tendencies based on a lack of teacher motivation. In fact, there is some evidence

that this reform goal illuminates a tension between the establishment of a middle management position—career ladder teachers—and the restructuring of power relations that supposedly are a central feature of site-based management approaches to school change.²

“Too many meetings” and “the machines don’t work,” also can be seen as a more direct attempt by teachers to question the issue of time. There is little doubt that building a faculty consensus on schoolwide goals takes time. However, if teachers’ time is already severely limited by classrooms that in our observations ranged from 35 to 40 students, then the issue of time is central. Furthermore, while identifying problems with copying may seem to exemplify an obstructionist response to fundamental change, it can also be looked at as an insight that reform will not endure and make a difference unless teacher’s work is altered; teachers need time to study teaching and teach students in ways they find to be educationally defensible. If teachers spend all their free time working on a broken-down copier, they have less time to devote to professional responsibilities. In this sense, the focus on copying can be seen as an important insight that a *prerequisite* for engagement and significant school change is an increase in the amount of time teachers have to study their own teaching and act on their understanding to develop appropriate practices. This potential insight concerning teachers’ work never was considered as the principal made the pragmatic choice to have career ladder teachers generate goals and then use those goals as a springboard to further change.

Even though the principal was able to rework the mission statement with the help of career ladder teachers, about half the staff continued to resist the reform process. The other half, in time, developed a strong commitment to the reform process and were actively engaged in trying to make it a success. Observation notes indicate that teachers who were engaged tried hard to translate articulated goals into action plans—plans that would in one way or another alter teaching methods and the education offered to students. Those that resisted did so by withdrawing from the reform process, playing a minor yet cynical role, and in some cases actively protesting our involvement as researchers in the reform process.

The principal’s and career ladder teachers’ awareness of teacher resistance was evident in a May 16 meeting of career ladder teachers, where the question of how to present their goals to the rest of the staff was brought up. While some on the committee argued that it was necessary to involve all the staff in the decision, the principal noted that (1) “teachers are not going to want to do it,” (2) “if committees get too large they will not be effective,” and (3) “there doesn’t appear to be enough money to pay teachers for extra time” (to attend additional

reform meetings). On the basis of these concerns it was decided to have a “minimal discussion” stressing an overview of the goals. When this approach was used in the faculty meeting, teachers responded by saying very little, and when they spoke they generally cast doubt on the determined goals. This response caused the career ladder committee to reassure the resisting faculty: “This [reform process] isn’t change or more work. You still will be able to teach as you want and move to a community orientation. Some concessions on an individual level will be necessary.” While this assurance might have convinced some teachers to vote for the reform program, it is more likely that the unanimous vote reflected teachers’ reluctance to be singled out as obstructionists. Support for this interpretation comes from our observations of meetings following the vote where over half the staff continued to resist the implementation of the reform effort. Some teachers openly showed their disdain for the reform process by engaging in other activities, such as marking papers or, in one instance, polishing bowling shoes for the entire meeting. Some teachers went even further and stopped coming to the meetings.

Teachers also protested our involvement in the reform process and in particular the assumption that we were needed to monitor and assess the reform process. One expression of this resistance was that teachers commonly referred to us as the “cooperative learning police”—signifying that we were monitoring teachers’ attempts to incorporate cooperative learning into their classrooms as part of the reform process. Another expression of this resistance was that teachers simply would not allow us into their classrooms even though they had as a faculty agreed to do so. One teacher expressed what we suspect were the sentiments of many when he stood up in a site-based meeting and stated that he had as much or more understanding of schooling than we did and would be happy to take our place in judging the merits of the reform.

The second-wave school change researchers acknowledge the importance of involving teachers in successful reform efforts, and both first- and second-wave researchers urge reformers to pay attention to teachers’ understanding of the reform process. Their pragmatic emphasis on engagement, however, makes it likely that resistant acts will be viewed as obstructions, problems to be overcome. From the perspective of first-wave school change researchers, resistance to innovation is seen as part of the quest for stability within educational institutions. Obstructionist acts, therefore, are expected and viewed as a “natural” part of the school change process. They represent a problem that must be dealt with, not a potentially insightful act. Nowhere is this view of resistance more clearly articulated than in Havelock’s (1971) formula for innovation: $\text{Innovation} = \text{Demand} - \text{Resist-}$

ance (p. 45). Although resistance is thought to be natural, it is not inevitable according to first-wave school change researchers. Instead, its root is found in the deficient personality traits of those using the reform. According to Havelock (1971), these include dependence—the need to depend “on the views of peers and hierarchical superiors” (p. 46); insecurity—the need to “flee from change by seeking security” (p. 47); and dogmatism—the tendency “to accept innovation only when proposed by dictatorial leaders” (p. 47). Resistance, from a first-wave perspective, includes acts undertaken by individuals with deficient personality traits who need extensive support if they are to engage with the reform process. Clearly, resistance has nothing to do with insight.

Second-wave school change researchers are not so strident about resistant teachers. However, they still view resistance as conservative acts that need to be altered if reform is to be successful. Rosenholtz (1989), for example, introduces her views on resistance by quoting a teacher who is reluctant to go along with a mandated discipline policy: “I believe in having my own way of doing it . . . I have used a reward system and have found it works beautifully. So I don’t see why I have to change” (p. 155). Rosenholtz argues that this resistance to the implementation of a schoolwide discipline policy indicates the teacher’s unwillingness to make sacrifices for the school or have a vision of the future:

We hear . . . the defeat of the future and the defense of the past. She seems to feel no sense of communal responsibility for behavioral problems in her school and instead chafes against every attempt in her school to alter the current system, a system that already conforms to her conception of good classroom management. She is reluctant (if not altogether unwilling) to consider alternative possibilities and challenges, or to sacrifice her own management strategy for the school’s common good. This is the paradox of uninvolved teachers. With announced change, they tend to withdraw in ambivalence or anger without mounting any counteraction. (P. 155)

From Rosenholtz’s point of view the teacher is standing in the way of change, and in many ways she is. However, Rosenholtz assumes the teacher’s actions are conservative and a problem to be overcome without considering the possibility that they reflect insights of some sort. She operates within a deficit conception of teacher authority where teachers’ understanding of what is good for students is discounted. Note how she links conservatism with the suggestion that the teacher is acting in ways that confirm “her conception of good classroom

management.” While resistance, and teachers’ understanding of that resistance, needs to be accounted for, from Rosenholtz’s perspective, this is only because resistance suggests the need for a compensatory project to correct cultural deficiencies that avoid the characteristics of a “stuck” school.

Even Sarason, who in many ways is quite sensitive to teachers’ perspectives, develops a theoretical view of “school culture” that limits the possibility that teacher resistance supplies an important insightful perspective on the process of reform. School culture, in Sarason’s (1971) view, is composed of “programmatically and behavioral regularities” of which teachers are indefinitely aware yet to which they are emotionally attached. Thus, “any challenge to a programmatic regularity is more likely to engender feeling than reason” (p. 68). Many of the programmatic regularities of schools are thought to be driven by “the power of faith, tradition, and habit”; they are not the result of “rational thought” (p. 71). If teachers’ contributions to the making of school culture are viewed as habitual and emotional, not as rational, it is unlikely that teacher resistance will be seen as an insight of one sort or another.

Whether the strategies to correct these deficiencies move in the direction of providing outside assistance to enable teachers to gain skill mastery, collaboration, or some other form of “reculturing,” recommendations offered within school change perspectives generally aim to further teacher engagement. In the process, the insights of resistant teachers may be overlooked. For example, teachers’ continuing resistance in West Meadow Elementary suggests that issues of authority and time are long-standing concerns, and protests about our involvement and the role of the district may reflect teachers’ implicit understanding of how constructed notions of expertise put teachers in a hierarchical relationship with university faculty and district administrators. Where teachers appear to call into question the legitimacy of this hierarchy, the school change perspective is focused on finding ways to make the hierarchy work better (e.g., see Havelock 1973, and Huberman and Miles 1984). One resistant teacher summarized what may be motivating many of the teachers when she said, “Teachers are gun-shy because they have gotten burned by the district and there is no guarantee that this program won’t get out of hand.”

Resistance, in our view, can play an important part in reform efforts even if, in the short run, it works against the implementation of the reform. This idea of “resistance” is largely derived from the early writings of Paul Willis (1977). In his now classic work, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Willis shows how working-class students resist an implicit school contract where

credentials, in this case a high school diploma, are exchanged for acquiescence to control mechanisms. Resistance, in Willis's view, is a political act that reflects an understanding of the hidden implications of schooling—the way schooling acts to reproduce class inequalities.

Willis (1977) found resistance in students' acts, suggesting that they "may not know what they say, but they mean what they do" (p. 126). Even asking resisters why they did what they did would not resolve the meaning of the act because resistance cannot always be fully articulated by the actors. The meaning of resistant acts, therefore, is likely to remain ambiguous. On the one hand, resistance may be nothing more than laziness or an excuse of some kind; on the other hand, it can reflect important political insights. This ambiguity is used by school change researchers to discount resistance. Hargreaves (1982), for example, believes the concept of resistance reflects the political hopes of critical educators—not actual evidence gathered in schools (p. 111). On this view, claims about resistance have not met the basic requirements of scientific study. Of Jean Anyon's study of five schools documenting student resistance, Hargreaves (1982) states "[There] is no indication . . . that theories have been *tested* by sensitive treatment of data; that evidence has been actively sought out in such a way that it might disconfirm her existing hypotheses and assumptions; that competing possible explanations of particular selections of evidence have been rehearsed and compared; that evidence has been used to generate as well as to test theory" (p. 114). The ambiguous nature of resistance *can* be used to support the political aims of those using the concept. However, it is unlikely that science of any sort can confirm with certainty the meaning of resistant acts, if, in fact, as Willis claims, actors "may not know what they say but mean what they do." Given that resistance is often not fully articulated, political theories are likely to inform how they are understood.

School change perspectives are no exception in this regard. While school change theories rarely articulate an explicit political theory, inherent in their pragmatic suggestions are political assumptions. For example, not only do first-wave school change researchers endorse top-down reforms as long as teachers develop commitment and engagement, but even second-wave school change researchers, who are explicit about the need to involve teachers in significant ways in the reform process, find nothing wrong with working with top-down reforms "as long as one can assume that there are no characteristic features of the school culture that can adversely interfere with stated objectives" (Sarason 1971, p. 35). Similarly, Fullan (1991) argues for reforms "blending top-down initiative and bottom-up participation" (p. 83). He says "Neither centralization nor decentralization really

works. Mandates make people resist change. Leaving it to the school denies the benefits of coordinated support and problem solving. What does work is interactive pressure and support, initiative-taking, and empowerment through coordinated action based on individual realism of activity" (p. 211). Inherent in these proposals is the political assumption that the issue of teacher authority can be worked out within the current educational hierarchy.

The pragmatic acceptance of school hierarchies in the school change literature reinforces the prevalent tendency to define teachers' resistant acts as unreasonable and obstructionist. It is ironic that overlooking these potential insights leads to a reenactment of the push-pull cycle school change researchers hope to overcome. Thus, while resistant acts are likely to be ambiguous, they should not be immediately disregarded. They can direct our attention beyond the limits of the school change discourse to the fundamental institutional relations and school structures that help define relationships, roles, and the nature of teacher's work. Resistance can signify a political form of good sense (Apple 1986). This is not to say that resistance always signifies good sense; clearly it does not. Indeed, we were interested in determining the accuracy of the judgments made by West Meadow teachers—a topic we pursue in the next section.

The Good Sense Embodied in Teacher Resistance

The question of whether teachers are resisting or merely obstructing change depends on the accuracy of their judgments. We wanted to find out if observations, interviews, and questionnaires supported the implicit questions that teachers were asking about their work. Teacher responses to questionnaires and their initial attempt to come up with schoolwide goals suggest their doubts about two central issues: authority and workload. In terms of authority, they seemed to doubt that they would be given greater decision-making latitude over their own work; instead they worried that the district would still control the reform process. In terms of workload they seemed concerned that the reform process would increase their responsibilities. If these are simply conservative responses to change, then our data should indicate that the district, in fact, was shifting power to teachers even though the teachers cast doubt on the process. Furthermore, the data should also show that the district was prepared to alter the structure of teacher's work, even in small ways, so that the extra amount of work associated with the reform would not simply be added onto teachers' already busy day. On the other hand, if the reform involved no real shift in

power and if the structure of teachers' work was not addressed as part of the reform effort, then teachers' resistance to reform, in the form of articulated goals that were self-protective and modest, signified good sense—an indication that fundamental issues of time and authority had to be addressed structurally *before* the reform could be implemented. The interviews conducted with the Valley District superintendent and assistant superintendent, as well as with the West Meadow principal, suggest that the resistant teachers expressed a well-founded understanding of their institutional circumstances.

In recounting the local factors that encouraged a move to site-based decision making, both the superintendent and assistant superintendent refer to the Valley Teacher Association (VTA) letter to the district as a turning point. In that letter the VTA claimed there was “too much district direction, too much talk-down.” According to the assistant superintendent the VTA felt that teachers “didn’t have options on the curriculum and the testing and so forth.” As a consequence, the district decided to explore site-based decision making.

The superintendent puts this response to the VTA in perspective by recounting the years that proceeded this pivotal event:

Valley has this tradition of shared governance that had been in effect for about 11 years prior to that time [the time of the letter] which was a very strong feeling of teacher involvement, parent involvement, and lots of involvement at the school level. . . . So what had occurred over time . . . was that the focus was at the school level with a relatively weak central office. The thing that we found was that there wasn’t a lot of clear content about who had what responsibilities and who was accountable for what, and what the goals were. So it was a kind of loose federation. . . . Accountability was defined as everyone setting a couple of accountability goals and then at the end of the year each person deciding whether she or he had met them. . . . There just wasn’t much holding the district together. . . . So by the time I came in, there was a pretty strong felt need to pull the instructional program together. About that time the State core [a set of specific objectives divided by subject matter that teachers were to follow] was coming out and we just needed to get some articulation and coordination in the instructional program. So in my first two or three years there was a lot of District-wide effort.

The recent history of the district, therefore, had been one of consolidation and centralization of power with increased coordination and accountability in the form of state core objectives. Considering the long history of shared governance in the district, this change in district-school relations gave teachers reason to doubt that the site-based re-

forms would move back to the time where the “focus was at the school level.” While teachers had a right to be skeptical, they also had a responsibility to look carefully at what was being proposed. And so the abrupt change from shared governance to a strong centralized district office is not sufficient evidence to support teacher resistance. What, then, was being proposed in terms of authority and workload by the district?

To determine guidelines for site-based decision making the district used the career ladder task force that had been in place for about two years. In the assistant superintendent’s words, this “committee raised some concern with the VTA . . . [because] it gave the committee more power than it had before”; but, it was already formed and meeting once a month and therefore could easily be used to give the superintendent feedback. Specifically, the superintendent would make suggestions for the guidelines under which site-based management would operate and the career ladder committee would give feedback. In total, 11 guidelines were articulated to direct the site-based management process. Before looking at one of the more influential guidelines, it is important to note that, given the obvious tension between teachers and career ladder teachers at West Meadow, it should not be surprising that the feedback the district received and the process of forming the guidelines themselves probably reinforced teachers’ doubts about the possibilities of gaining more decision-making authority. Teachers probably viewed the development of site-based decision making as one indication that significant authority was not going to be shifted to teachers.

In describing the difference between the current site-based decision-making policy and the previous policy of shared governance, the superintendent stated that “one difference between this and shared governance is we are still going to have common assessment around the State core and even the District core. . . . So the groove that is going to hold this thing together is some common expectation for learning results, and that was never clear in the past. That is going to be under [the guidelines for] accountability and we expect to have schools over time, particularly low-achieving schools show some good progress and measure themselves against themselves over time.” Site-based decision making, therefore, would give teachers options as long as they used a common assessment that reflected the objectives laid out in the state and district core curriculum. Furthermore, the expectation was that schools would be held accountable for raising the scores of their students on those tests that measured learning outcomes. The superintendent summarized this view of site-based management well when he said that site-based decision making involves “maximum flexibility

with respect to the means of inducing learning and achieving our learning objectives and great accountability for results.” Teachers would be able to choose their pedagogical methods, but the results would be measured in terms of predetermined state and district objectives. Teacher authority would focus on the means of education, while educational ends would be more centrally determined.

While it is impossible to determine in any absolute way, it is likely that this approach to site-based decision making did little to alter the authority of teachers.³ If anything, it did provide for a much more explicit type of accountability. Teachers have always retained some control over the means of education, since it is very difficult to specify with any assurance how teachers should interact with a particular student or group of students. However, by linking accountability to learning results, teachers may have actually lost some control. Learning results are not simply a matter of what teachers do. They depend on many factors outside the control of teachers, including class size, home-school relations, and the fit between assessment criteria and cultural background, to name a few.⁴ By exchanging “maximum flexibility” on the means of education for this type of accountability, teachers would be obliged to more closely follow the state and district guidelines given that these standards would be used to judge the effectiveness of the site-based process. With this sort of accountability in place, it is doubtful that teachers gained much authority from site-based decision making; indeed, a case could be made that their authority might actually be constrained. One support for the later conclusion comes from the principal of West Meadow, who states “The problem as I see it is that the words are site-based, and as yet I don’t know that the actions of the central office are site-based, and that’s a real dilemma for us in the school.”

Teachers also expressed concerns about their workload. From the district perspective it appears that workload has a direct relation to responsibility; as a teacher’s responsibility increases so will the workload. For example, when the assistant superintendent was asked if site-based decision making was a way to make use of the expertise of teachers she commented “Yes, very much so because they are right in the classroom. And that is a national movement. NEA has been pushing for it also. Now when we do that, though, we see how much power they want, because with that comes a lot of responsibility and a lot of time spent. They may say we don’t want it. Do it at the district level.” The assistant superintendent seems to be suggesting that teachers have a choice: they can argue for and obtain more responsibility over classroom matters and school policy and accept the increased workload, or they can avoid an increased workload and allow the district

to retain control over curricula and educational aims. When asked about the possibility that teachers' loads would be reduced to allow them time for reform responsibilities, the assistant superintendent was quite clear that the extra decision-making responsibilities would not be offset by reduced workloads: "Not to reduce their load, but to give them options. For example, they have 10 contract days that are nonteaching, and that is quite unusual. . . . That is one way they can utilize that time. . . . The other way that they can do it is using career ladder money to pay for some committee work if they have a project they are working on." Creative ways could be used to refigure the current workload but no extra resources would be provided to reduce the workload. The principal at West Meadow not only confirmed the fact that the district would not be reducing the teachers' workload, but she also suggested that the workload was likely to increase: "You know if we are spending a lot of energy in our schools trying to come up with something, and they [the district] are still chucking out all the work for us, that's not site-based, and that is what gets people angry. . . . So maybe if the school is the focus, then we are not the ones that are going to be shafted. Some of the extra curricula things they dream up as important might be what gets shafted instead of us, and being in our schools and trying to help us." These interview data support teachers' concerns that issues of authority and workload were not addressed by the implementation of site-based decision making. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that teachers' decision making and authority within the site-based plan might actually be more constrained than previously, and at the same time their workloads are increased. Again, while teacher resistance cannot be directly tied to these conclusions, it is also problematic to assume that resistance is simply a conservative response to change, where teachers reject attempts to increase their decision-making power and authority. There is much evidence to suggest that teacher resistance does indeed reflect good sense.

The Political Aspect of Reform

Teacher resistance to the West Meadow reforms suggests the need for significant restructuring of both authority relations and teacher workload. The recommendations laid out by the first and second wave of school change researchers discount these insights. From the perspective of first-wave school change researchers, the reform effort at West Meadow followed many of their recommendations. Instead of "compromising" the reform to diminish the obstructionist acts of the

teachers, the principal employed a series of strategic moves, such as shifting decision making to career ladder teachers, to keep expectations high and force teachers to “swim in new waters.” By doing so, she ignored initial resistant acts that first-wave school change researchers would argue are a “natural” part of reform efforts. Further, the principal tried to create teacher engagement by bringing in a number of consultants, including professors from the local university, to help teachers master the skills associated with cooperative learning and whole language. If any mistake was made from the perspective of first-wave school change researchers, it was that not enough assistance was provided. They would likely argue, that as a consequence, many of the resistant teachers never gained mastery and therefore never gained the commitment to become fully engaged with the reform effort.

Our reading of the resistant acts of West Meadow teachers suggests a very different interpretation of the reform process. As we have shown, teachers doubted that the district would really allow them to make site-based decisions and questioned the assumption that university researchers were needed to assess the merits of the reform effort; they could do the job quite well themselves. Teachers also stated consistently that time was a major concern and that without changes in their workload, additional decision-making responsibility would only further intensify their work. Resistance was not a matter of insufficient outside assistance, but rather the lack of change in teachers’ workload and the long-standing authority relations between teachers, district personnel, and university faculty. Because the recommendations of the first wave of school change researchers dismiss the potential insights suggested by resistant acts, they miss what these teachers tell us is foundational to successful reform efforts.

In contrast, the recommendations of the second wave of school change researchers begin to consider the issues of authority relations suggested by resistant teachers. Collaboration, especially forms of collaboration that are not “contrived” (Hargreaves 1994), enables teachers to increase their involvement in decision making. In addition, collaboration often requires some changes in school structure to allow for the increased participation of teachers. With this said, however, it is also the case that the recommendations of second-wave school change researchers fall short of the basic alteration of teachers’ work called for by the insights of resistant West Meadow teachers. Teacher resistance at West Meadow took a broadly political character, which indicates that basic changes in the educational hierarchy (the relations between teachers, principals, district administrators, and university faculty) were a *prerequisite* for change. In comparison, the recommendations made by second-wave school change researchers can operate comfort-

ably *within* current authority relations (note the endorsement of both bottom-up and top-down change) and it is important that they do not push for alterations in teachers' workloads as a necessary precondition for the implementation of collaborative school cultures.

These limitations in the second-wave perspective can be seen by considering how these scholars would interpret the reform effort at West Meadow Elementary. Second-wave school change researchers would quite rightly question the principal and career ladder teachers' decision to have minimal discussion of their proposed school goals—allowing only a 90-minute meeting with the entire faculty; this would be viewed as a type of contrived collegiality, not collaboration. Whereas collaboration is spontaneous, voluntary, developmental, unpredictable, and organically worked into the teacher's day, contrived collegiality is administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation oriented, fixed in time and space, and predictable (Hargreaves 1994). At West Meadow, the focus was on implementing a reform, not on faculty development, and even though teachers voted unanimously to pursue the reform, teachers' survey comments and actions in meetings suggest that the reforms really did not reflect their voluntary assent. The problem with the West Meadow reform, from this perspective, lies in moving from contrived collegiality to collaboration.

Collaboration, in the school change literature, is seen as a means of both improving teaching and setting the stage for reform:

Collaboration strengthens resolve, permits vulnerabilities to be shared and aired. . . . Collaboration eliminates duplication and removes redundancy. . . . Collaboration improves the quality of student learning by improving the quality of teachers teaching. . . . Collaboration permits the sharing of burdens and pressures that come from intensified work demands. . . . Collaboration narrows the difference of time perspectives between administrators and teachers. . . . Collaboration reduces uncertainty and limits excesses of guilt. . . . Collaboration enables teachers to interact more confidently and assertively. . . . Collaboration in dialogue and action provides sources of feedback and comparison. . . . Collaboration increases teachers' opportunities to learn from each other. . . . Collaboration encourages teachers to see change not as a task to be completed but an unending process of continuous improvement. (Hargreaves 1994, pp. 245–47)

The development of collaborative school cultures, as articulated by many second-wave school change researchers, does require structural change of schools. Hargreaves (1994), for example, describes one vision of structural change in his discussion of "reculturing." Recultur-

ing involves changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs as well as in school structures. While Hargreaves furnishes little detail in specifying the structural changes required to enable reculturing, he offers the *moving mosaic* as one of the "most promising possibilities for the post-modern age and provides structural grounds for . . . vigorous, dynamic and shifting alliances within and beyond the school" (p. 257). Here Hargreaves envisions a school structure reflecting collaborative relations. A moving mosaic allows teachers and others invested in the educational good to form overlapping teams with shifting memberships as circumstances dictate. For example, a teacher might be a member of a department but also a school improvement team at a particular point in time. These two committees would have overlapping responsibilities. This moving mosaic, according to Hargreaves, provides a structure for collaborative cultures that school change researchers see as informing the reculturing process.

This vision, as is true of most proposals for collaboration, addresses issues of both authority and teacher work structure. However, as we have mentioned, implementing this type of recommendation does not require significant alterations in the educational hierarchy, nor is it based on the need to first reduce the workload of teachers. It could be argued, in fact, that the extra committee work required in collaborative forms of school culture might actually further intensify teachers' work if corresponding time was not freed up for them to leave the classroom and participate in such meetings. Second-wave school change researchers have not insisted upon increasing the amount of time teachers have for planning; Hargreaves (1992*b*, 1993), for example, adopts an ambivalent position in discussing proposals to make more time available to teachers.

In a study of teachers' responses to reforms giving Canadian elementary teachers more preparation time, Hargreaves concludes that "an important number of elementary school teachers may not want additional preparation time at all" (1993, p. 59). Instead, these teachers preferred to spend their school time with their students. Teachers who regularly left their classes to another teacher to prepare lessons or grade papers reported frustration and concern with being away from their students. While Hargreaves's findings are indeed important, they are misleading as a general representation of the role of time in teachers' lives. The Canadian teachers described the difficulties of choosing to be with students or to spend time correcting student papers; they were not considering the overall desirability of reduced workloads.

In complaining about the lack of time, the resistant teachers at West Meadow supply an importantly different perspective than the one offered by Hargreaves. They believed the sum total of their existing

responsibilities required more work than the number of work hours in a day. Given their schedules, any type of reform was viewed as an imposition. The reform movement, therefore, was seen as one more symbol of injustice; it was imposed, and the promise of greater teacher authority was a ruse intended to enlist teacher engagement. By referring to us as the “cooperative learning police,” teachers expressed a perspective explicitly aired in meetings—that the professors and administrators were in league in opposition to teachers. When West Meadow teachers protested our role in evaluating the reforms, they expressed a resentment of the university’s role in constructing legitimate knowledge, and they suggested that researchers often impose standards that make teachers look bad. Their critique of reform focused on the basic composition of their jobs.

The resistant acts of the West Meadow teachers should not be surprising: teachers have for over one and one-half centuries been subjected to reform efforts that bounded their authority and intensified their work. Class assumptions, for example, can be seen in the historically constructed division of labor between teachers and administrators, where school administrators do the conceptual work—determine the aims and purposes of education—while teachers are expected to find ways to facilitate or execute the wider conceptual decisions made by others above them in the educational hierarchy (Gitlin and Labaree 1994). During the Progressive Era, superintendents of major school systems traded upon popular criticism of teachers as a justification for introducing bureaucratic means of standardizing hiring practices and the curriculum. District-mandated curricula and testing were introduced to ensure students were taught a standard curriculum. Teachers’ authority to construct a curriculum in keeping with their understanding of the subject matter, teaching methods, and the students in their classrooms was sacrificed (Murphy 1990; Callahan 1962; Kliebard 1987). Current support for this division of labor between teachers and administrators comes from the superintendent in our study, who argues that schools should have the “maximum flexibility, with respect to the means of inducing learning and achieving learning objectives, while also providing great accountability for results.” Put simply, the division of labor between administrators and teachers has much in common with the class divisions between production workers and management (Gitlin 1980).

Patriarchal doubts about women also played an important role in shaping the school structures we have today. Weiler (1994), for example, notes that educational reformers in the early twentieth century argued for teacher supervision because of the presumed weaknesses of women. To overcome those weaknesses reformers suggested not

only supervision, but usually male control over women teachers. Further evidence of class divisions and patriarchal assumptions comes from interviews conducted with women teachers from New York City during this same time period (Markowitz 1993). A summary of these interviews indicates that the concerns of the resisting teachers at West Meadow have much in common with those teaching almost 80 years earlier.

The teacher had no autonomy in determining how many pupils she would teach, which ones, or who would remain in her classroom or leave. Nor could she decide what subject to teach or grade she would teach. She had no say in how long the teaching day would be, or what duration a class period would be. She was allowed no input on texts used; on grading methods; on standardized tests; or the format and content of report cards. (P. 97)

Within the classroom, as well as within the system, teachers technically had no authority regarding the content of their instruction, for they were expected to follow the Board's syllabus and curricular bulletins. (P. 101)

Even if a teacher did hold sway behind the closed door of her classroom [i.e., resisted the prescriptions imposed by the Board] every New York teacher was subjected to supervision and rating by administrative superiors. This was done through the mechanism of a teacher rating sheet which . . . consisted of a long list of specific items upon which the principals had to give judgments semiannually. (P. 110)

With the continual erosion of teachers' free periods over the years because of the increased demand of clerical work, and such extra tasks as lunchroom and yard duties, large percentages of teachers had no time to devote to classroom preparation or the correction of students' work during the school day. . . . Further inroads on a teacher's time were caused by the periodic broadening of the objectives of education which implied additional services for pupils. (P. 117)

The persistence of teacher criticisms of educational hierarchies suggests a need to take such concerns seriously. Insofar as school change perspectives lead us to neglect teachers' criticisms of existing educational hierarchies and focus our attention on bringing in outside consultants to help teachers attain mastery or to develop collaborative

cultures, such perspectives may operate to obscure the historical roots of the current construction of teachers' work that limits reform.

The implications of viewing the problem of reform in political, as opposed to managerial, terms is profound. If the problem is political in the sense we have described, actual reform should challenge the perpetuation of class and gender-based hierarchies. That in itself is good. And until fundamental injustices in the character of teachers' work are addressed, meaningful reform is unlikely. By neglecting the political dimension to reform, managerial approaches—those approaches that centrally focus on ways to engage teachers and other school personnel—risk the result of the West Meadow reforms: political grievances continuously operating to undermine reforms that are purportedly underway. By ignoring the insights expressed in teacher resistance, the managerial perspective operates to recreate the push-pull cycle that school change researchers hope to overcome.

Reform clearly is not working and so it is time once again to look carefully at how to proceed. Our interpretation of the insights of resistant teachers indicates that reformers might be better off focusing on the preconditions for reform: giving teachers the authority and time they need to teach in ways they find educationally defensible. The educational hierarchy ought to be transformed so that school administrators and district personnel support the efforts of teachers, and teachers' workloads should be decreased to allow time for planning, curriculum development, and innovative pedagogy. The recommendations of the first-wave school change researchers either ignore or run counter to these sorts of changes. Second-wave school change researchers, in contrast, begin to address authority issues but are rather bounded when it comes to re-envisioning school hierarchies and ambiguous about the need to alter the workload of teachers as a prerequisite for reform. If we are to move in the direction suggested by teachers' resistant acts, ways must be found to build on the good sense embedded in such acts. Doing so means developing collective relations where teachers work together to examine and articulate the implicit insights embodied in resistant acts. Achieving the changes in time and authority we have suggested will be difficult and will not necessarily lead to any predetermined outcome. What these changes will do is challenge stereotypic and unfair characterizations of teachers and provide the foundation for an escape from the push-pull cycle that governs current reform efforts.

Notes

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The Political Aspect of Reform

1. While the first wave does, in large measure, come before the second wave (the exception being Sarason's earliest work), the term "wave" is used to signify a shift in the way educational change is conceptualized and understood.

2. Hart's (1994) study supports the view that teachers sometimes resist career ladder programs. Her study employs role theory in an illuminating comparison of two schools that introduced career ladder programs, one where divisions between career ladder teachers and other teachers were pronounced and one where relations between the two groups were collaborative.

3. Most studies of site-based decision making have reported little change in teachers' authority. See, e.g., Malen and Ogawa (1988, pp. 256–57) and Timar (1989, pp. 268–71).

4. This is, of course, a well-established point in educational sociology. See, for example, Jencks (1972) and Bowles and Gintis (1976).

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